



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

News Release

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 28, 2021

Statement by VA Secretary McDonough on President's FY 2022 Budget

President outlines proposals to invest in critical health care improvements and increased opportunities for Veterans

The Biden-Harris administration today submitted to Congress the president's budget for fiscal year 2022.

As the administration continues to make progress defeating the pandemic and getting our economy back on track, the budget makes historic investments that will help the country build back better and lay the foundation for shared growth and prosperity for decades to come.

This bold budget request by President Biden to Congress will ensure VA is moving swiftly and smartly into the future, with much-needed monetary investments in our most successful and vital programs. To fulfill VA's sacred promise to care for our nation's Veterans, families, caregivers and survivors, we must return the investment Veterans have made in America through their service.

The budget includes the two historic plans the president has already put forward — the American Jobs Plan and the American Families Plan — and reinvests in education, research, public health and other foundations of our country's strength.

The total 2022 request for VA is \$269.9 billion (with medical care collections), a 10% increase above 2021. This includes a discretionary budget request of \$117.2 billion (with medical care collections), a 9% increase above 2021. The 2022 mandatory funding request totals \$152.7 billion, an increase of \$14.9 billion or 10.8% above 2021. VA's 2022 request is in addition to the substantial resources provided in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

Additionally, the President's FY 2022 Budget includes \$18 billion as part of the American Jobs Plan to address VA health care infrastructure needs in the short- and long-term, together with \$260 million for the American Families Plan to support the administration's commitment to provide supplementary support to Veterans who are parents, in order to offer a holistic, family-friendly approach to care.

At the Department of Veterans Affairs, the \$117.2 billion discretionary request would:

- **Work to eliminate Veteran homelessness and prevent Veteran suicide.** The budget includes \$2.2 billion in discretionary appropriations for Veteran homelessness programs, to include \$486 million in American Rescue Plan funding. This will support expanded case management services to help more Veterans gain permanent housing through housing vouchers and prevent homelessness among low-income Veteran families. Additionally, the budget includes \$598 million for Veteran suicide prevention outreach programs that address the risks for suicide, with the goal of intervening before a Veteran reaches a point of crisis. VA will also support the new Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program.
- **Help our Veterans build civilian lives of opportunity with the education and jobs worthy of their skills and talents.** The budget supports the president's commitment to help Veterans with education and job training by making key investments in the Veterans Benefits Administration. This includes an increase of \$81.5 million for the Digital GI Bill Modernization Effort to better serve Veterans who are using their GI Bill benefits. Funding also increases by \$5 million for Veterans' Clean Energy Job Training in conjunction with the Department of Labor, and by \$3.6 million for the VA Disability Employment Pilot Project to assist eligible Veterans with service-connected disabilities seeking employment opportunities.
- **Ensure VA welcomes all Veterans, and diversity, equity and inclusion are woven into the fabric of the department.** The department is making a strong commitment to ensuring VA welcomes all our Veterans, to include women, those of color and whom are LGBTQ+. To support that commitment VA has created a new Office of Resolution Management, Diversity and Inclusion which will benefit from an increase of \$12.9 million to strengthen VA's diversity program.
- **Keep faith with our families and caregivers.** The budget provides approximately \$1.4 billion, an increase of \$350 million for the Caregiver Support Program. Through this program the Veterans Health Administration provides support to individuals who act as caregivers for Veterans. The 2022 budget supports the phased expansion of the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers to include all eligible Veterans, no matter when they served.

Enacting the budget policies into law this year would strengthen our nation's economy and lay the foundation for shared prosperity, while also improving our nation's long-term fiscal health.

For more information on the President's FY 2022 Budget visit: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/>.

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